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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (12/15): US financial support to the PA receives widespread media coverage

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Main Stories:  
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US Financial Support to the PA Budget:  
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All three dailies front page news on US Consul General Daniel Rubinstein and PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad announcing the transfer of \$75 million to the PA budget yesterday in Ramallah. Fayyad expressed gratitude for the US efforts and continuous support to the PA. Al-Hayat Al-Jadida quotes Fayyad reiterating that it will be difficult to achieve sustainable development under occupation.

Consul General Rubinstein is quoted in the three dailies noting that President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad have established a two-year program to build the institutions of a modern state, and to develop the Palestinian economy and civil society. The Consul General was quoted saying, "The President and Prime Minister have our strong support in fulfilling the goals and priorities of this program, which we see as integral to U.S. efforts to help achieve a two-state solution and comprehensive peace in the region."

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Yasuf Mosque:

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Independent news outlet Maan reports that Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger visited the West Bank village of Yasuf yesterday, following the attack against the village mosque by settlers. According to the Israeli daily Haaretz, Metzger was escorted into Yasuf by the Israeli military and Palestinian police, and said "I came here to expression my revulsion at this wretched act of burning a place holy to the Muslim people." He added, "This is how the Holocaust began, the tragedy of the Jewish people of Europe."

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PLO Central Council Meeting:  
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Independent daily Al-Quds and Palestinian Authority (PA) official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida lead with news on the PLO Central Council meeting today in Ramallah. The Council will discuss recommendations from the Fatah Revolutionary Council and PLO Executive Committee for extending the presidential term for President Abbas until the next elections, according to the Basic Law.

The coverage quotes PLO Secretary General Yasser Abed Rabbo telling the press yesterday that the meeting will also discuss issues related to the negotiations and continued Israeli settlement activities in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories.

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 Hamas 22nd Anniversary:  
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Independent Al-Ayyam and Al-Quds front page reports on Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Hanniyeh speaking at a huge gathering in Gaza celebrating Hamas' 22nd anniversary. Hanniyeh stressed that kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit will not be released until

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Israel responds to all Hamas demands. He also urged all Palestinian factions to work on a new initiative to retain national unity and end the state of division.

Hamas affiliated news outlet Paltimes.net quotes senior Hamas official in Gaza Mahmoud Al-Zahar saying that resistance is a general concept and is not limited to armed resistance.

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UK Issues Arrest Warrant for Tzipi Livni:  
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The three dailies and Maan news agency report on the arrest warrant issued by a British court for former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni for her involvement in Israel's assault on Gaza last winter. The reports note that the British government is looking into the repercussions of such a warrant.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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Al-Quds runs an editorial under the title "Guided Resistance" referring to Hanniyeh's speech to mark Hamas' 22nd anniversary. In his remarks, Hanniyeh referred to Hamas' "guided resistance" without further explanation. According to the writer, one can easily conclude that Hanniyeh is referring to the unannounced truce with Israel. The writer questions, "If this is Hamas' option, why didn't Hamas make this choice from the beginning and avoid all this destruction and suffering?"

RUBINSTEIN